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Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER. PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."
JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

A curious question, illustrating the logic of legalism, has arisen in England. A man published a book on South Africa, leaving the last page blank, with the following words at the top: "Cecil Rhodes: What I Think About Him." The point was raised that this constituted a libel, and eminent jurists thought the publication would certainly be actionable. While there were some lawyers who dissented from this view, the publishers decided to omit the "libellous" page. It is taken for granted in the press that the courts would have found libel in the facts stated.

"Puck" prides itself on its consistent opposition to special legislation and meddlesome efforts to protect individuals against their own folly or vice. Yet it advocates legislation to prevent as well as to punish "the criminal recklessness of those misguided persons who, under pretence of belonging to some new or peculiar sect, refuse medical aid for their sick, and pretend to rely on the efficacy of faith, prayer, or some miraculous interposition of Providence." It seems to think, too, that this position is perfectly congruous with individualistic principles. Would "Puck" force people to apply to regular physicians for medical aid? Are we to be prohibited from acting on our own beliefs? How would "Puck" treat those who have no faith either in "divine" healers or any other kind of healers? Surely it believes in the right to commit suicide or risk life. True, "Puck" uses the words "*their* sick," implying that it is criminal for a person to refuse medical aid for his family or relatives, but not to refuse such aid for himself; but this position is still more absurd than that which would compel the sick to apply to a licensed physician. Imagine a law which would compel a man to call a physician to treat his wife or father or adult child, while allowing him to refuse medical aid himself!

The New York Society for the Prevention of Crime asks the legislature to confer upon it the power to seize and arrest persons suspected of committing illegal acts. The "World" objects to such "government by private societies," and says it would be akin to Anarchy. The "World" is mistaken. There would be nothing Anarchistic in the plan. It would mean nothing more than the addition of a certain number to the police force of the city. The agents of the private society would only arrest the suspects; their trial and punishment would be left to the State. Anarchy means the suppression of crime by private societies without any connection with the present State or any recognition of the governmental principle. In other words, it means private *defence*, not private "government." The "World," in spite of its recent studies of the philosophy of liberty, equality, and justice,—studies which delighted many guileless reformers, who were innocently led to expect great aid from it in the cause of progress,—does not know the difference between defence and government.

After the appearance of the second article in Mr. Yarros's series written in review of Mr. Salter's book, now concluded by the publication of the third article in the present issue, I received the following welcome message from Mr. Salter: "I appreciate very much the thoroughgoing consideration my book is having in Liberty, and I shall say what I can in defence of myself after the concluding article." This is no more than I expected from so candid a critic as Mr. Salter, and I extend to him most cordially the hospitality of these columns. His defence will be awaited with interest by myself and by the readers. To my thinking, Mr. Yarros has torn his argument to tatters, and I am curious to see the crazy-quilt that Mr. Salter will make out of his rags. Perhaps I may add, for Mr. Salter's information, that Mr. Byington's article, "Is Government Justified by Experience?" in Liberty of February 22, was written in answer to Mr. Salter's book, though I at first supposed it to have been called out by the controversy between Mr. Bolton Hall and myself.

Two Chicago judges have severely rebuked juries for rendering verdicts of acquittal in certain cases, where the evidence, in the opinion of the judges, demanded conviction. They declared that it was useless to have courts of justice, if juries continued perverse and ignorant. The newspapers thoughtlessly applaud these judicial lectures; but let them stop to reflect a little. We are constantly told that juries are the sole judges of the facts, and that they have no right to refuse to take the law from the court. Suppose a jury should dissent from a judge's rulings, and venture to lecture him on the injustice and ignorance of his interpretation of the statutes or decisions. Would not the entire judiciary and press denounce this as impertinent and outrageous? Now, a judge, under the present system, has just as little justification for criticising the jury's findings with regard to the facts. The jury are supposed to be more fit and competent to pass upon facts than the judge; what right has he, then, to assail them? It must be borne in mind that, if the evidence is strong and convincing, the judge is, in many classes of cases, empowered to direct a verdict, and that it is only where the conflicting evidence raises a doubt that the facts are referred to the jury. There being this doubt, the jury must be permitted to decide whether it is reasonable or not. It clearly follows that, in cases where trial by jury is a right which the law does not permit an accused to waive or bargain away, judicial criticism of jurors is particularly unwarrantable.

It comforts me much to find myself confirmed in my high estimate of Basil Dahl as a poet by two so artistic natures as those of Comrades Gordak and Robinson, who in another column sound his praises. And, with one exception, all the opinions that have come to my ears coincide with these. Further contributions from Dahl's pen may be expected to appear in Liberty from time to time. Not all, of course, will attain the heights reached in "To the Toilers." A comparatively unpretentious flight, for instance, we have in the few verses, "To Whom It may Concern," printed on the sixth page of this number. Yet even these lines contain a lofty sentiment and give evidence of a very pretty wit. In the next number will appear a third poem, "With Nature," of more importance than the second, but still unequal to the first. Yet I am confident that this youth of twenty-two (for such I now know to be his age) is destined, as he matures, to outdo all his early efforts. Those readers of Liberty who are interested in his work (and I must think that nearly all of them are) I earnestly advise to procure the New York "Home Journal" (231 Broadway; 5 cents a copy; $2.00 a year) of March 11, on the first page of which appears one of his poems, "To Her I Love," of about the same length as "To the Toilers," and approaching it in excellence, but of a quite different order. And, while they are at it, they had better get a copy of the issue of March 18 also, for that contains, in the same place, a poem by Comrade Gordak—in my view his best work, from the strictly poetical standpoint—picturing in inspiring fashion the conditions, internal and external, under which Rouget de Lisle composed the immortal "Marseillaise." Let me conclude this paragraph with the remark, though it may seem mysterious and irrelevant, that of late I have had evidence that, in the matter of taking hints, the readers of Liberty are more obtuse than I had supposed them to be. "Pointers" apparently are wasted, even on the brightest of them. (Comrade Herman Kuehn will please consider himself excepted.) Well, they are the chief losers.

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

Mr. Salter's "Anarchy or Government."

III.

In the realm of industry, all our instinctive feelings and prepossessions are in favor of the method of liberty. This, says Mr. Salter, is as it should be, for government always requires special justification.

Now, these are very significant admissions, and Mr. Salter strangely fails to perceive that they are wholly repugnant to his great argument from the social organism. If we are all members of an organism, and if society has the right to "go as far as it needs to go and can go," then why should its attempt at interference always require special justification? It ought, on the contrary, to appear to us as the most natural thing in the world for "society" to concern itself with the welfare of its "members," and to insist on personal supervision. Again, if no line of principle can be drawn as to how far a society may go, why should an attempt at *industrial* regulation excite the special opposition of all instinctive feelings and prepossessions?

Doubtless Mr. Salter's answer would be that practice, habit, and traditional economic teaching have so firmly established the idea of freedom in industrial matters that the assertion of society's ethical right, to him so manifestly valid on reflection, is at first blush resented as an impertinence and encroachment. Here, then, Mr. Salter repudiates the criterion of what "everybody would feel," and implies that "all our instinctive feelings and prepossessions" may be entirely wrong. Yet, it will be remembered, in discussing government interference in defensive war, he unhesitatingly appealed to the general sentiment, and assumed that its decision was final and supreme. What would Mr. Salter say if I, shielding myself behind his own admission that all our instinctive feelings and prepossessions are in favor of industrial liberty, were to claim that no argument in favor of government would be entertained after such a statement? He would certainly regard it as an unscientific attitude, since reason has to be brought to bear upon such questions, and feelings have to be examined in the light of the highest philosophical truth. It is, therefore, clearly incumbent upon him to reconsider his position on the question of defence against external enemies, and base it, if possible, on something more trustworthy than instinctive feelings and the general conscience.

All this, however, is *en passant*. Coming to the main question, we find that Mr. Salter divides it into two sub-questions,—one of fundamental principle, the other of expediency. On the point of principle, his view is already known to us. Society, he told us, has the right to go as far as it chooses, needs, and can; there is no line of principle to be drawn, our membership in society giving us a claim on its protection and imposing on us the duty of submission. Having already fully considered this argument in connection with protection and the "higher interests," I need not repeat what I have there said. But, with reference to expediency, a few remarks are in order.

Whether a society is bound to interfere in industrial relations, says Mr. Salter, depends entirely on whether such interference is needful. "We have simply to ask: How do things go when individuals are left to themselves? . . . Do individuals succeed when put upon their own resources? Do all who are willing to work get the chance to work? Do the stronger respect the weaker and refuse to take advantage of them? Do all share in some measure in the benefits, conveniences, and comforts that go to make up the material basis of life? If these questions can be answered in the affirmative, liberty, or Anarchy, in this realm is surely justified." But the facts, continues Mr. Salter, show that liberty does not work well, since we have enforced idleness, poverty, dishonesty, oppression, and exploitation. We can only say that the world somehow gets along, but the social consciousness is not satisfied, and hence interference is wise and expedient. "There would seem to be no other course than for the society to see what it can do for itself."

The fundamental misconception which destroys the force of this reasoning is found in the assumption that the present industrial condition is one of liberty, or Anarchy. Because the State does not now regulate wages and prices, does not proscribe combination, and does not revive a certain kind of mediæval regulation of industry, it is superficially assumed that industry is free, and that a fair test of Anarchism is afforded in that sphere. But surely Mr. Salter ought to perceive the baselessness of this assumption. In all important industrial matters governments still interfere, while in some they interfere more persistently than formerly. At common law banking was free; to-day it is hedged about with numberless restrictions. The issue of the medium of exchange is a monopoly of a few governmental favorites, and the entire system of credit upon which modern industry rests is arbitrarily restricted by "protective" legislation. Then there are protective tariffs, laws regulating the rate of interest, factory acts, child-labor legislation, and a thousand other things that would have no place under industrial liberty. Finally, there is land monopoly, which deprives men of access to natural opportunities. Mr. Salter ought to know that, in our view, these monopolies and restrictions are the direct cause of the evils pointed out by him, and hence, unless he is prepared to disprove that theory, he cannot logically affirm that liberty does not work well in industry. The one thing certain is that the present industrial system is unsatisfactory; but, since it is not a *free* system, no one can pronounce liberty a failure. It is, of course, open to any one to contend that, even if perfect industrial freedom existed, certain evils would persist; but he who makes such an assertion only infers that liberty *would* fail; he does not say, and cannot say, that liberty *has* failed. Whether liberty *would* fail is a different question,—a question of economics chiefly. The point to emphasize here is that, as liberty has not yet been tried in industry, no case for social interference has been made out. So far, then, as Mr. Salter's expediency is concerned, the time has not yet come for society "to see what it can do for itself." The method of Anarchy has to be tried first, since, as we have been told, the presumption is always in its favor, while in the particular sphere of industry all our instinctive feelings and prepossessions are on the side of liberty.

But, while Mr. Salter entirely overlooks this important fact of the absence of real liberty from the industrial sphere, he indirectly raises the whole question of the effect of perfect freedom when he denies that there is any necessary connection between supply and demand and equity. In other words, Mr. Salter, after erroneously supposing that we have perfect competition and the free operation of the law of supply and demand, goes on to question the claim that justice necessarily results from a free play of supply and demand. Having called attention to his mistake of fact, let me now assume a condition different from that now existing,—a condition of perfect freedom of competition,—and consider the theoretical question whether justice must naturally follow from the free play of supply and demand. Mr. Salter says:

> If unlimited production of useful things were possible, and if all men were equally gifted and were situated in something like similar circumstances, it [supply and demand] probably would [work justice], not because men meant to do justice, but because they would be virtually compelled to do it.

These suppositions, Mr. Salter truly observes, are imaginary, but it is well to note that he agrees in a general way with those who affirm that justice might be the spontaneous product of certain political and physical conditions, regardless of men's will and intention. The difference (and it is a vital one) between Mr. Salter's position and ours is this: we maintain that industrial Anarchy *would* bring about justice, while he believes that it would not, and that, in addition to perfect competition, it would be necessary to have equality of gifts. In other words, he says that three elements are necessary: (*a*) equal gifts; (*b*) equal opportunities; (*c*) free competition; while we, assenting with regard to the necessity of the elements (*b*) and (*c*), dissent from his view to the extent of rejecting (*a*).

Here we must get a clear idea of what Mr. Salter means by justice. Nowhere in the book is the term defined, and we have to infer his meaning from the text generally. He writes:

What one produces and what one gets are two distinct things, and there seems to be no necessary connection between them. How is what one gets determ ned (under the present system)? Not really by the utili. of what one produces and has to sell, not either by the st of producing it and bringing it to market, but rathe. y the quantity of things of the same sort that happen be in the market. . . . It is an illusion to imagine, as . Spencer does, that under the free action of supply d demand a person gets what he gives; he gets simp. what he *can* get, which may be more and may be less n he gives.

The obvious implica n is that justice is satisfied with the exchang equivalents, with the getting by each of what ives. But, if this is Mr. Salter's meaning, wh es he include equality of gifts among the c ions of spontaneous justice? If a shoemaker er-age gifts exchanges his products with a ta of average gifts and obtains an equivalent, justice is satisfied. But, suppose there is another shoemaker of exceptional ability, who produces more than his competitor; is he bound to give more in exchange to the tailor than the latter gets from the less gifted shoemaker? Is there any reason why the more capable should not be advantaged by their superior gifts to the extent permitted by freedom of competition? If one man can do twice as much work as another in a given time, why may he not get twice as much pay?

Now, under the freest competition, coupled with equal opportunities so far as access to natural media is concerned (meaning by equal opportunity the right to hold land which one occupies and uses for the satisfaction of one's needs), what is guaranteed is the exchange of "average equivalents," so to speak. Competition cannot destroy the "rent of ability" entirely; hence unequal gifts will bring unequal rewards. But where is the injustice? Mr. Salter's own implied definition of justice does not demand the appropriation by the community of the rent of ability, yet he expressly says that equality of gifts is an essential condition of automatic justice.

It is very unscientific for Mr. Salter to attack those who assert that supply and demand insures justice without ascertaining first whether he agrees with their definition of justice. He speaks of what "most people would call justice," but he ought to know that most people have no definite idea of the term. They mean by justice "the square thing," fair play, and so on; but what *these* things are, and what the scientific test of fair play is, they do not know. Ask the average man whether it is fair or just for Paderewski to charge high prices for tickets to his concerts, and he will unhesitatingly answer in the affirmative. Paderewski is not "protected" by any legal privilege; he does not suppress competition. Unequal gifts may bring unequal rewards without violating the sense of justice of "most people."

Let me indicate, however, from my point of view, the connection between supply-and-demand and justice. Justice is simply "equal freedom,"—the recognition of the right of each to do what he pleases without infringing the equal rights of others. Now, under equal freedom, production, trade, exchange, banking, credit, and every other economic function or activity would be exempt from all governmental interference; in other words, supply and demand would have free play. To restrict supply or demand is to interfere with some legitimate freedom of production or exchange or contract, and such interference is unjust. Anything that takes place under free play of supply and demand *is* just, for there can be no economic injustice in the absence of some invasion of some one's sphere as producer or consumer. It is true that under free play of supply and demand a man gets only what he *can* get; but Mr. Salter's error consists in supposing that this has nothing to do with justice. The fact is that justice demands precisely this very thing,—that men shall be allowed to get what they *can* for their services in a free market. Justice does not tell us *how much* we are to get; it only tells us under what *conditions* we are to carry on our activities. It is a logical deduction from what it tells us that we can complain of nothing as unjust which takes place er the prescribed conditions.

alter may have a totally different conceptio tice, but, if he has, his first logical step is to ch he Anarchistic conception of justice, since ev pends upon it and is deducible from it. At a see now that, from our point of view, the connection between justice and supply-and-demand is intimate and close, and also that we are perfectly consistent in affirming that true and complete liberty in the industrial realm would necessarily result in economic justice.

Coming now to Mr. Salter's positive theory of the industrial organization, I quote from him as follows:

> In normal type of social organization, an individual gets back more than he gives; he gives what he can or needs to give, and in turn receives of all the benefits of social organization (so far as he needs them); if he needs protection for his life or possessions, he may get a great deal more than he ever paid for, and, if he needs education for his children, it is quite as little a question of a *quid pro quo*. As a member of society, he simply gets whatever the society, of which he is a part, is able to give; the riches of the whole go to each one, according to his circumstances and needs.

This is plainly the Communistic principle. Each is to give what he can, and get what he needs. Mr. Salter does not deem it necessary to demonstrate the justice of his plan, manifestly regarding it as self-evident. To show the baselessness of this belief, I need only remind him of the difficulties already dwelt on in my previous articles. Who is to decide what one can give and what one needs? Society, says Mr. Salter, forgetting that society is dumb, and that the question is always between the majority and the minority. The majority, therefore, will first determine what one should contribute and receive in return, and then proceed to enforce its decision upon the minority, without any regard to its views and sentiments. The majority will tax one man for the education of another man's children; will compel an employer to pay higher wages to an employee than he wishes to pay; will force the industrious to support the idle; and, in short, will do everything which "society" is supposed to require. It would be interesting to know how this absolute right of the majority to dispose of the life, liberty, and property of the minority is deduced, and where the warrant for it is to be found. We have already seen that, even from the standpoint of the "social organism" theorists, majority rule cannot be justified.

In the concluding sections of his final chapter Mr. Salter sums up his conclusions by saying that for the present progress lies in the direction, not of liberty, but of constraint and regulation. The dominant tendency, he continues, will not have worked itself out to its legitimate result until the whole industrial life of a people conforms to the requirements of the social conscience, until every able-bodied person has a place in the industrial order, until industrial inventions and improvements become at last public property and accrue to the common benefit. It is needless to state that I cannot agree with Mr. Salter's interpretation of the facts. The dominant tendency may appear to be toward regulation, and the trend of things may seem to favor government, but drifting is not progress, and society is now simply drifting. There may be a considerable increase of governmentalism, but the results will prove disappointing and reactionary, instead of healthy and beneficial. Restraint will fail, and the other method, the method of liberty, will then have to be tried. An intelligent diagnosis of disease would prevent the blunder w seems inevitable, but "society"—that is, the majority—lacks the intelligence requisite to a scientific analysis of the situation.

Mr. Salter expresses his conviction that in the long run, and considering the issue of things, "social action" (meaning government) will tend to become unnecessary. "Government now," he says, "and an end of government in time to come. The social consciousness, in proportion as it is real, demands government under existing circumstances; but finally the social consciousness may be so perfect that government will be allowed to drop away like an out-grown shell." This is a repetition of what Mr. Salter stated at the outset,—that perfectly just and civilized men do not need any government. Anarchists, I know, are expected to evince proper appreciation of this generous concession, but it really does not concern them in any way. It is entirely immaterial and irrelevant to their case against the existing order.

In bringing this rather long review to a close, I think I may state with some confidence that I have proved the charges which I made in "opening the case." If Mr. Salter can successfully meet the criticisms I have passed upon his defence of government, I sincerely hope he will do so. V. S. Y.

"Natural Rights" That Exclude Friends.

About two years ago, while standing in the large doorway of the shop, engaged in conversation with the foreman, something went by us as though a missile had been thrown.

"What the devil was that?" exclaimed my companion; "I am going to find out, anyhow."

Something appeared to be going on in the farther room, and he went in there, shutting the door behind him. He soon emerged, bearing in his hand what had once been a bright and happy bird—a kingfisher. It was a sight that I never shall forget; neither will my companion. Man of the world that he was, unscrupulous in most matters (and proud of the fact, as denoting strength), he was visibly touched. *For once the ribald laugh was hushed*, in the face of this great sorrow. The lower half of the bird's bill had been shot off close to

the head (it was still hanging by a hair), and the victim was in the last stages of starvation. Such a haunted look of misery may I never see again in the eyes of any creature! The kingfisher is a very wild bird, and undoubtedly this one had come to us with an idea that we could relieve it in some way. It had surrendered to two men who never take a gun or fishing-rod in their hands. A little rap of its head upon the door-post, and the poor sad eyes had lost their look of pain,—the tragic life was ended. Only think of what that bird *may* have suffered! It may have been the only provider for a nest of young ones; it may have had to hear for days the pierced, agonizing cry for food from a brood of starving little ones,—the darlings of its simple heart,—and to see the little heads droop one by one, and then—eternal silence. No hope of immortality for these poor little things, however Man may wrap *his* caste in dreams.

And all for what? To give such men as Harrison and Cleveland a moment's gratification of the in-and-in-bred thirst of slaughter,—the heritage of our centuries of blood.

And now I am requested—we are requested—to exercise a sort of suzerainty over the children of these men to keep them from being maimed, sold, tortured, or killed by their parents.

The request looks reasonable.

But, taking everything into consideration, it would be injudicious and inexpedient for us to undertake anything of the kind. In the first place, the rule of contract must be flawed,—that stone to quarry which has taken centuries; there it stands, the whitest, grandest block of marble ever hewn, ready to become the foundation of the most glorious temple of humanity ever reared, a tower of Babel that shall pierce unto the heavens and cover every language in the world. They have the modesty to want us to crack this masterpiece, so that, if we attempt to build high, the edifice will topple over and—back into the bottomless pit for another ten thousand years? They who wish to interfere with us in the management of *our* helpless babes, and to have the excuse for trumping up all manner of charges against us.

I am somewhat acquainted with Man and the other animals. I was brought up with dumb animals,—or "critters," as they are called here; have taken care of them, watched and studied them; and I must say that I love, admire, and respect them, and can echo the words of Tennyson:

> O great and sane and noble race of brutes!

I could tell many things of their heroism; their tenderness and solicitude for their young and one another; their gentleness, dignity, beauty, and intelligence. But Man—great stars! I could fill column after column with facts within the scope of my personal experience, relating to the treachery, cowardice, savagery, meanness, envy, malice, and instability of the human race,—facts that would astonish, startle, and be beyond the belief of the optimists who imagine that we are highly civilized. I object to any line of "natural rights" being drawn betwixt man and the dumb brute in favor of the former. Natural rights! Why, then there must be unnatural rights. Unthinkable!

We are asked to flaw the foundation stone of Equal Liberty in order to protect the embryo Jack-the-Rippers, the Napoleons, and the Blaines, from the consequence of being born of cruel parents. And they wish to conjure and spellbind with the word Slavery used in an illogical sense. Much trouble has sprung from that word already.

Mr. Tucker has covered every point in this question, but there is one which he has not been called upon to make much of,—*id est*, the length of time that must elapse before the realization of Anarchism. Surely a much higher civilization will be then attained, and the cases of the abuse of children will be as rare as deaths by lightning. And then, as Mr. Tucker says, the boycott—a most terrible weapon. It will be used, too, with such tremendous force in some cases that sympathy will be turned from the tormented child to the child's tormentor.

Experience and logic have taught me to love my friends and hate my enemies. I should be loth to enter into any contract that would interfere with this "natural right." If I must, I will.

But—the partridge comes and sits on a tree within ten feet of the house; the gray squirrel (wildest of the wild) and "brer rabbit" gambol in the orchard; the chickadeedee sits on the window-sill; the humming bird makes "ruby lightning and thunder" round the place all summer; and the checkered adder raises its solemn head through the cracks in the floor of my shop, and, with the dark, mournful eyes of Lamia, looks at me askance.

And, if ever the botched Anarchism proposed comes to realization in my day, I shall stand forth and say:

"Drop that gun! I will help you protect our enemies, but, damn you, dont you shoot my friends!"

William Walstein Gordak.

I was in error in describing Basil Dahl as a Slav. Though born and bred in Russia, he is of the Jewish race. That about him which is so strongly indicative of the Slav has been acquired rather from environment than by inheritance.

Comrade Labadie, I am sure, will be the first to protest against Dr. Maryson's interpretation of his perfectly true assertion (always maintained by the editor of this paper) that "Anarchism begins and ends with liberty" as meaning that the advocacy of liberty should be divorced from economic considerations. I am sure of it, because I know that Mr. Labadie, in his championship of liberty, constantly points out the economic effects that would follow from the removal of law-placed obstacles that hinder free activities in the sphere of production and exchange. I am sure of it again, because Comrade Labadie, in the lecture in which he emphasizes the negative character of the Anarchistic philosophy, quotes approvingly and in his own support from my essay on "State Socialism and Anarchism," which is nothing if not a demonstration of the inseparability of economy from liberty. It is perfectly true that one need not believe in mutual banking in order to be an Anarchist. It is also true that one may desire universal voluntary communism without thereby disqualifying himself as an Anarchist. Since an Anarchist is one who believes in making equal liberty the basis of social relationships, such a one cannot become less an Anarchist because of any peculiar belief that he may hold as to the effects of equal liberty. If Mephistopheles, desiring, not the happiness of humanity, but its torment, arrives by mental processes at the conclusion that the way to achieve his desire is the establishment of equal liberty, and accordingly becomes an advocate of equal liberty, then Mephistopheles is an Anarchist. But does Dr. Maryson suppose that anything is to be gained for liberty by joining hands with Mephistopheles in such a crusade in liberty's behalf? Does he not know that the reason of State Socialism's growth and of liberty's retardation is found mainly in the fact that the people have been taught to look for economic benefit from the former rather than from the latter? Does he not know that Anarchism has progressed where so-called individualism has dwindled, simply because it has married liberty and economy, instead of divorcing them? If he doesn't, Comrade Labadie does; and I counsel the latter to let his voice be heard in a manner that will make his meaning unmistakable, and so stop this nonsense which Dr. Maryson, J. K. Ingalls, and others are trying to put into his words.

An anonymous correspondent, writing in admiration of Basil Dahl's "To the Toilers," incidentally criticises the line, "You live, and know not what existence is," claiming that the poet's idea would have been more properly expressed by the words, "You exist, and know not what life is." The point is not well taken. In the first place, the distinction sometimes made between existence and life—namely, that the former means a merely vegetative career, while the latter implies satisfaction of the demands of a complex and highly-developed personality—is nothing more than a habit of speech utterly lacking in etymological warrant. As far as animate beings are concerned, the words existence and life are interchangeable. To exist is to live, and to live is to exist. So that, even had the poet's idea been what my correspondent supposes it to be, it would not have been more accurately expressed by the suggested substitute for his line. But I offer a more telling answer to my correspondent when I point out that he has not grasped the poet's meaning. It was not Basil Dahl's intention to present an antithesis, or even a discrimination, between life and existence, as is easily to be seen by an examination of the analogous lines immediately following the one criticised. Take this, for instance: "You hope, and know not what it is to hope." This makes it perfectly clear that in the criticised line the poet's meaning is: You live, and know not what it is to live. The distinction is not between life and existence, but between possession of life and failure to understand life, as in the other case it is between possession of hope and failure to understand hope. I am so absolutely and clearly right about this that it is needless to say more. But it may be well to remind my correspondent that, in writing and criticising poetry, it is necessary to give some heed to the exigencies of rhythm. The substitute line which he suggests does not scan.

The Chicago Civic Federation has secured the finding of indictments against fifty "bucket shops," and is congratulating itself on the job. The prosecuting attorney says that the evidence collected is very strong, and that convictions ought to follow. Not only were the proprietors and managers arrested, but also the clerks, typewriters, messenger boys, and everybody who had any connection with the offices. What a great moral victory! The villainy of the boys and girls who participated in the gambling operations by copying and mailing or delivering messages is pitifully shocking. The virtuous Civic Federation will doubtless receive the cordial thanks of every pure, good, and decently stupid man and woman in that ideal community, Chicago. Unfortunately, the commendable efforts of the Civic Federation may not be heartily seconded by that immoral wretch and Anarchist, Judge Goggin, whose notions of justice are a disgrace to the bench. Thus, when the indicted gamblers were giving bonds before him, he stopped court, and addressed the spectators and prosecution as follows: "This thing of the Civic Federation, or combination, or whatever it is, indicting clerks and young women, who are endeavoring to make an honest livelihood by their skill, is an outrage against decency and civilization, if such a thing as civilization exists, and I am beginning to doubt it. I shall release the ladies in this case without bail and upon their own recognizance, and, if they will have a lawyer in court to-morrow, I will quash the indictments against them. I think the grand jury that indicted these young ladies should be itself indicted." What treasonable and criminal sentiments! Who would blame the Civic Federation if it held up this shameless ally of criminals to the scorn and execration of the religious and moral elements of the community?

After a silence of a few months' duration, literary critics are again regaling us with solemn articles about the "turning of the tide" and the "reaction against realism." A wonderful imagination is required to see a reaction from realism just at this juncture, when the two greatest of recent novels, by the leading writers of fiction, are profoundly offensive to all moralists, Philistines, and prudes. Where, pray, is the alleged *renaissance* of the "truth and beauty" which are denied to Hardy and Meredith? Has another "Prisoner of Zenda" been given to the world?

Accomplishing Its Aim.

The Society for the Suppression of Vice is doing great work; there is more suppressed vice than ever.

B. H.

Like Chatterton, "A Marvellous Boy."

To the Editor of Liberty:

I share your enthusiasm in regard to Basil Dahl. Perhaps it would interest you to know exactly how the poem affected me. I read the production twice, to be sure that my eyes were all right; then aloud to the folks, who pronounced it fine. I dropped the paper then, being unable to read further until the enchantment lessened. I did not get to sleep till eleven o'clock that night (late for me), and arose at three in the morning, built a fire, and read and re-read "To the Toilers." So much for the power of the kind of genius that Freedom attracts.

The case is a marvellous one; here is a mere boy, with a brain comparable with T. L. M'Cready's when that bright "dreamer" was in manhood's prime, together with a poetic gift surprisingly brilliant.

Shallow critics might find fault with the continued repetition of words and rhythm, but in that lies one of the greatest charms of this musically majestic poem.

I live not far from the stormy Atlantic coast, and often have I watched the breakers, as they roll in upon the beach. They will rise, one behind the other, gathering force and swelling to their fullest height as they advance, and then, in beauty, power, and music, break and sweep and swing across the waste of sand. They fascinate the on-looker, and men will sit motionless for hours gazing at the magic sight. So it is with this poem. Note the lines beginning, "The eagle builds a nest as well as you," and, "Love you the noble and the beautiful," and, "The rocks will furnish you with stone enough."

The thoughts contained in "To the Toilers" may be common among the highly intellectual (I know not), but never since the earth was made or made itself have they before been put into such magnificent shape. The lines are as loaded with thought as a vine with fruit; but so clear, so simple, so direct and strong, are they that they bear the burden lightly.

William Walstein Gordak.

Not to Be Overestimated.

Dear Tucker:

You have not in the least overestimated Basil Dahl. I do not think that he could be overestimated. The fellow talks poetry as if he really meant it, and with the dignity and solemnity of a chanting priest. Surely such should poetry be,—serious statement of matters worth talking about, with rhythm unconsciously, or apparently unconsciously, spreading itself over all.

The poem is singularly affecting in its simplicity. I force myself to speak of it in a dry, critical way, for, if I should say all that I think, it would be such unmeasured and enthusiastic approval as is better thought than written.

John Beverley Robinson.

Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps.

The Secretary wants every reader of Liberty to send in his name for enrolment. Those who do so thereby pledge themselves to write, when possible, a letter every fortnight, on Anarchism or kindred subjects, to the "target" assigned in Liberty for that fortnight, and to notify the secretary promptly in case of any failure to write to a target (which it is hoped will not often occur), or in case of temporary or permanent withdrawal from the work of the Corps. All, whether members or not, are asked to lose no opportunity of informing the secretary of suitable targets. Address, Stephen T. Byington, Flushing Institute, Flushing, N. Y.

I herewith request every regular member of the Corps to let me know at once, by postal card or otherwise, his intention of keeping up the Corps work. It is somewhat more than a year since I made such a request before. During that time the Corps has made healthy progress; it is certainly stronger than then in steady working force, as well as in nominal membership, and evidences of the effect produced by its work are increasing. I would not have it understood, therefore, because I ask for this report, that the Corps is sickly. I suspect the existence of some dead wood in it, and hope to find out where that is, but do not think there is more of it than is ordinarily to be expected in every organization.

My reason for wanting to hear from the members again is the same that makes me think it necessary to have, as the regular basis of membership, a pledge to do a definite bit of work, or to let me know if the work is not done. It is because I think it necessary, in order to do my work of assigning targets to the best advantage, that I should know what the regular working force of the Corps is. Aside from the possibility of members dropping out through carelessness, there is the further possibility that some of those from whom I do not hear may have died or fallen sick without my knowledge. I do not think a postal card report once a year or so is too much to provide against such contingencies and assure us that the work is being kept up.

Target, section A.—The Minneapolis "Times," on February 7, having been asked to open its columns for the discussion of the money question by all persons who have intelligible views, did so in these words:

> The "Times" will print communications upon the money question upon the condition that they are accompanied by the name of the writer (not necessarily for publication), that they are unobjectionable in language, and do not exceed six hundred words in length. If any writer finds the space too limited, let him divide his matter into parts, to be printed as the exigencies of room and convenience may allow.

Among others who responded to this invitation, Alfred B. Westrup has been writing a series of letters in favor of the mutual bank (or, as he calls it, mutual credit) system. Give reasons for mutual banking, or point out that freedom is the essential condition of any satisfactory currency.

Section B.—Rev. Geo. D. Herron, D. D., Grinnell, Iowa, lectures on "The Redemption of Law from Anarchy," saying:

> The Christian ideal would lead the people in a political progress that would leave restrictive institutions with nothing to do, so that they would fall into the greater freedom thus achieved and die, as the acorn dies in the earth when the tree comes forth; the Anarchist ideal would lead the people in a descent to the lowest political hell, where individual self-will would establish the throne of perfect despotism and the order of perfect misery.

Yet he lately professed to believe in the doctrine of non-resistance. (See target for Section A in Liberty for February 8.) Remind him that Anarchism simply means the utmost possible abstinence from violence, and ask him what there is in the Christian ideal to demand the continuance of any avoidable violence. Remind him that, if the non-resistance doctrine has any meaning, its application must come now while men are bad and abuse each other,—not in the millennium, because in the millennium there will be no chance to practise non-resistance.

Stephen T. Byington.

Hands All Round!

[After Tennyson.]

Oh, wasn't it a funny thing
When nineteen honored mayors met
A revolution great to bring
In Taxes?—We'll be well-off yet (?).
But what astonished them the most
Was so much wisdom in a bunch,
And cultured Quincy was "mine host,"
As gaily down they sat to lunch.
Hands all round!
Liberty their cause confound!
Let's drink to their cool impudence, my friends,
And the great name of Anarch, round and round!

And, when the ample feast was done,
They, bold with beef and bright with wine,
Did "talkee, talkee," every one,
Of taxes, lovesome and divine.
They spoke of taxing house and land,
As if such things could taxes pay;
If so, I cannot understand;
No more, I calculate, can they.
Hands all round!
Liberty their cause confound!
To taxless Freedom we will drink, my friends,
And the great name of Anarch, round and round!

Below, upon the city's street,
The ever-surging mob moved on.
Oh, what a dance of weary feet!
Oh, what a world of faces wan!
There drunkenness and filth and shame,
And lust and crime and sore distress,
In whirling eddies went and came,—
The Hades of unhappiness.
Hands all round!
Everything comes from the ground!
Drink we to Labor's battle, my kind friends,
And the great name of Anarch, round and round!

Anon came night, and straightway home
These Massachusetts mayors went;
Some just a trifle sleepy, some
With minds on tax and tax still bent.
In dreams the problem followed fast,
And, while they plucked her feathers loose,
They trembled, hearing first and last
The squawking of that tortured goose.
Hands all round!
Liberty their cause confound!
A toast to Freedom's cohorts and our friends,
And the great name of Anarch, round and round!

William Walstein Gordak.

To Whom It May Concern.

You clothe your flatteries in sweet sleek words,
And wish your neighbor endless happiness;
But what you think of him you do not tell;
You have no courage to pronounce the truth.

Behind his back you mock and slander him,
Find fault with what he dreamed, or said, or did,
And, living in a little world, you seem
To fool each other, but you fool yourselves.

"Dear friend, by being true and good,
And wishing good to all mankind,
You'll ever have to scant your food,
And bear your tattered shoes in mind."

Dear friend, by being good and true,
The skin of calves I'll never use,
But also never have, like you,
My reason buried in my shoes.

Basil Dahl.

The Morality of Custom.

[Translated from Nietzsche's "Morgenröthe" by George Schumm.]

In comparison with the mode of life of entire ages the present is a very immoral age; the force of custom has become astonishingly weakened, and the sentiment of morality has been so refined and carried to such heights as to have become almost dissipated. For this reason is it so difficult for us, the later born, to apprehend the bottom truths concerning the origin of morality; and, when we nevertheless find them, they cleave to our tongue and will not out, because they sound crude! Or because they appear to be a libel on morality! So, for instance, the *principal dictum:* morality is nothing else (therefore especially *not anything more*) than obedience to customs, whatever these may be; but customs are the *traditional* mode of acting and judging. There is no morality in those things concerning which custom issues no commands; and, the less life is ordered by custom, the more circumscribed is the realm of morality. The free man is immoral because he *wishes* in all things to depend on himself and not on custom; in all primitive conditions of mankind "bad" signifies as much as "individual," "free," "arbitrary," "unusual," "unforeseen," "unreliable." Always, measured by the standard of such conditions, if a deed is done *not* because it is commanded by a custom, but from other motives (for instance, for the sake of individual advantage), aye, even from the same motives which formerly gave rise to the custom, it is described as immoral, and felt to be so even by the doer himself; for it was not done in obedience to custom. What is custom? A higher authority which we obey, not because it commands us to do what is *useful*, but because it *commands*. Wherein does this sense of custom differ from the sense of fear in general? It is the fear of a superior intelligence which commands, of an incomprehensible, indefinite power, of something more than personal; there is *superstition* in this fear. Originally all education, and the care of health, marriage, medicine, agriculture, war, silence and speech, the intercourse with one another and with the gods, were included in the domain of morality; morality demanded the observance of precepts by the individual *without any thought of self* on his part. Originally, therefore, everything was custom, and he who would rise above it was obliged to become law-giver, medicine-man, and a kind of half-god,—that is, he had to *make customs*, a terrible, perilous thing! Who is the most moral? *First*, he who fulfils the law most frequently; consequently he, who, like the Brahman, carries the consciousness of it everywhere and into every little fractional part of time, so that he is constantly on the alert for opportunities to fulfil the law. *Then*, he who fulfils it also in the most difficult cases. He is most moral who *sacrifices* most to custom. But which are the greatest sacrifices? According to the answer to this question, we come upon several different moralities; but the most important difference will be found to be that which separates the morality of the *most frequent fulfilment* from the morality of the *most difficult fulfilment*. Let us not mistake the motive of the moral system which demands the most difficult fulfilment of custom as the sign of morality! The subjection of self is *not* demanded because it is beneficial to the individual, but in order that custom, tradition, may appear as the ruling power, in spite of all individual advantage and longing to the contrary; the individual must sacrifice himself,—such is the commandment of the morality of custom. Those moralists, on the other hand, who, like the followers of Socrates, urge upon the individual the morality of self-control and abstinence as *his own advantage*, as his most personal key to happiness, *constitute the exception;* and, if to us it seems to be otherwise, it is so because we have been educated under their influence; they all are pursuing a new path under the strongest disapproval of the representatives of the morality of custom; they separate themselves from the community as immoralists, and are in the deepest sense bad. In the same way a virtuous Roman of the old sort regarded every *Christian* who first and foremost sought *his own* salvation as bad. Wherever there is a community, and consequently a morality of custom, the idea also prevails that the punishment for the violation of custom falls principally on the community,—that supernatural punishment whose manifestation and limit are so difficult to comprehend, and which is pondered with so much superstitious fear. The community may compel the individual to repair the immediate injury wrought by his deed; it may also take a sort of revenge on him because, as an alleged consequence of his deed, the divine thunders and lightnings are gathering over the community; but nevertheless it feels the guilt of the individual principally as *its* guilt and bears his punishment as *its* punishment. "The customs have become lax," thus runs the complaint in the soul of each, "when such things are possible." Every individual deed, every individual thought, causes a shudder; it is utterly impossible to realize how much in the course of history the rarer, the more select and original, spirits must have suffered in consequence of the fact that they have always been felt to be bad and dangerous,—aye, *that they felt themselves to be so.* Under the dominion of the morality of custom originality of every kind acquired a bad conscience; to this hour the sky of the best of mankind is, in consequence thereof, darker than it should be.

A Good Point to Insist on.

To the Editor of Liberty:

Permit me, an outsider to the ranks of individualism, to express my extreme satisfaction with the remarks of Mr. Joseph A. Labadie, in your last issue of Liberty, concerning the essence of Anarchism. He states there that he has made it "a point to insist that Anarchism is purely negative in its philosophy, that it lays down no arbitrary rules for the reconstruction of society, etc." I hail this sentiment as a most fortunate one for the propaganda of Anarchism, and consider the point not only well taken, but pregnant with the best results, if consistently and perseveringly insisted upon.

It was the dawning on my mind of this very thought that "Anarchism begins and ends with liberty" that made me turn to the pages of Liberty, in hopes of finding this view logically expounded (I was an orthodox Anarchist-Communist up to that time); hence my elation over Mr. Labadie's remarks. I tried then to advocate this essential limitation of Anarchism in an article which I called "Anarchy Pure and Simple" (printed in the since defunct "Solidarity" under the *nom de plume* of F. A. Frank), from which, if permitted, I would quote the following:

> Anarchism is essentially nothing more nor less than the basic principle of the future social organization,—the principle of the highest possible individual freedom consistent with rational coöperation. It neither includes nor precludes communism, which claims to formulate the economic relation of future free men. Anarchy is not a system of work and wages; it is a principle of social life.

Now, I concur with Mr. Labadie in the point that "this method of presenting Anarchism frees it of ambiguity and reduces it to its essence. . . . It does not put us under the necessity of defending either individualism or communism." For this implied admission of an eminent individualist Anarchist that otherwise there might arise the necessity, and consequently the logical possibility, of defending communism in Anarchy is only another form of stating, as I did, that Anarchism, "the science of liberty," neither includes or precludes communism.

I rejoice, therefore, to find an ally in Comrade Labadie, and consider this standpoint common ground where all libertarians may honorably drop their respective economic adjuvants from their Anarchist mixtures, and powerfully unite "to deny and combat the right of authority." For "this, and this only, is Anarchism's enemy, is Anarchism's antithesis, is Anarchism's implacable foe." Let us "relieve Anarchism of the burden of furnishing a cure for every conceivable ill that does or may afflict mankind"; and thereby purge also ourselves of the errors of dogmatism and too much hair-splitting in matters irrelevant to the principles of Anarchism proper. It was well said: "the ills that liberty cannot cure cannot be cured."

J. A. Maryson, M. D.

95 Stanton Street, New York.

The Toad.

[Emile Zola in Le Figaro.]

When a young writer, a beginner, comes to see me,—as often happens, and I always give him welcome,—the first advice that I offer him is this:

"Work much, regularly if possible, every morning the same number of hours. Don't be impatient; wait ten years for success and a market. And, above all, don't imitate us; forget your elders."

And my second recommendation is invariably this:

"Have you a good literary stomach,—I mean, a solid stomach, capable of digesting easily all the stupidities, all the abominations, that will be written about your works and yourself? No, I see by your blush, by your tremble, that you are still too young, too delicate, and that your very natural disgust is going to cause you much annoyance. Well, every morning, on rising, swallow a good live toad. They are on sale at the markets; your cook will get them for you; the expense is a mere trifle,—three sous apiece, if you buy them by the dozen; and in a few years you will have a literary stomach capable of swallowing the worst articles of contemporary criticism, without the slightest nausea."

The young writer eyes me uneasily, as I escort him to the door, insisting on the efficacy of this preventive method, which I have used with perfect success.

"Oh! I do not say that, at first, it is very agreeable. But one gets used to it, one gets used to it, young man. A good live toad, when you can keep it on your stomach, habituates you to all sorts of ignominy, all sorts of ugliness, all sorts of venom. For the entire day you are vaccinated against every imaginable nastiness. A man who swallows his toad daily is a strong man, whom thereafter nothing can move. Go ahead, young man, swallow your toad daily, and later you will thank me."

For my part, every morning for the last thirty years, before going to work, I have swallowed my toad in opening the seven or eight newspapers that await me on my table. I am sure that it is there; my eye swiftly scans the columns, and it is rare that I do not find it. Gross attack, insulting legend, lined with stupidities or lies, the toad sprawls in this journal when not in that one. And I swallow it complacently.

To be sure, as I tell the young writers who do me the honor to visit me, that was not very agreeable to me at the beginning. I must confess, however, that I undoubtedly had a special aptitude, for I acquired the habit very quickly. Though I made some wry faces over the earlier ones, I became hardened with the third or fourth dozen. Now, with age, it is marvellous,—the way they slip down! Things have even come to such a point that, if I had not my toad in the morning, I should miss it. Positively I should be like those old people who, being deprived of their customary breakfast—coffee or chocolate—pass a day in misery. If I had not my toad, I should be irresolute, uneasy, disenchanted, without courage,—in short, what is called a good-for-nothing.

Ah! you do not know what fine vigor it has brought me, since its entrance into my life! As the expression is, it gives tone to the stomach. Never do I work better than when it is unusually ugly and sweats poison with an especial copiousness. It acts as a lash upon my whole intellectual being; it is a stimulant which rouses me, causing me to sit passionately down at my work-table, with the furious desire to have genius. Yes, not only does it make my stomach active and solid, capable of digesting insult and rascality as well as *bonbons*, but also it is a marvellous excitant for my morning task; it is a strengthening and expanding tonic for the brain, and I certainly owe to

it the fire of the best pages that I have written.

Besides, I have not only my morning toad; I have others, oh! many others. For more than twenty years, for instance, it has been the habit of my publisher, my good and old friend Charpentier, to send me, at intervals of two or three weeks, a p kage of articles published about my books. His house subscribes to a clipping bureau, and the clippings which he receives he distributes among his authors. This method almost completes the collection begun by the articles which I find in my morning newspapers. And it is no longer a matter of a single toad, but of a whole sea of toads, the toad hole itself, in its frightful pullulation.

How it moves me to think of these packages from the good Charpentier! They have given me at the same time one of the enjoyments and one of the most salutary exercises of my life. Through them I have received the highest lessons in wisdom; I have perfected myself in courage, patience, resignation, love of truth and justice. And I accuse them only of having given me some pride. One cannot imagine what they contain of violence, hatred, injustice, and error. And, above all, much stupidity. I would like to open one of these packages in public and show the attack in its course, beginning in a widely-read newspaper, passing thence to the provinces, and coming back by way of foreign lands, repeated in every form. Old enemies have become my friends; friends, on the contrary, have gone to swell the ranks of my enemies. Then there is the small fry, gammon of fifteen years' standing, gossip that has become legendary, false charges, stereotyped, which obtain currency at so much a line. It is absolutely necessary to live. For a quarter of a century now the contents of these packages have not varied; to-day it is the same heap as at the beginning of my career; much paper spoiled for nothing, not the smallest profit coming to me therefrom.

Once, some fifteen years ago, I thought of collecting in a volume, under the title, "Their Insults," a delicate selection of the compliments addressed to me by the critics. I assure you that the compilation would have served as a perfect manual for all future Mardis-Gras. And you may imagine how the heap must have grown since! My attic at Médan is full to the beams, and the worst of it is that the heap continues to grow; the river flows to-day as madly as yesterday; nothing calms it, neither my work or my age. Decidedly the storm is endless, the skies are bursting, it rains toads.

Really an interesting work could be prepared on the truly appalling mass of articles which the press publishes daily in regard to certain writers. I do not refer to the conscientious studies,—very rare, alas!—written out of love and respect for literature. I refer to all the base spite, all the rebellious stupidity, all the envious anger, which a writer's success arouses, especially if his success be financial. Perhaps some day I shall try to analyze this torrent of mud which a man of letters induces, as soon as he rises from the ranks. To-day I shall content myself with ticketing three sorts of articles, the most common.

First, there is the stupid article. It is the most excusable. Usually it is written by a very young man, unless it is the work of some old simpleton who has fallen into his second childhood. This critic has felt nothing, understood nothing, of the work of which he renders an account, so that he goes astray in perfect serenity, not in the least suspecting what he is doing. He passes beside the author's intentions, he accuses him of crimes which he has not committed, he lends him the perversities of his own imagination, doubtless fertile in meannesses. Through stupidity, I repeat, not through malice. But how troublesome is this stupidity! What a manufacturer of falsehoods, of imbecile legends, it may be! I could cite twenty instances where a blockhead has sufficed to sully a beautiful and healthy work until the day when truth puts in a tardy appearance. Often do I recall the words uttered by Taine in my presence a long time ago, when I, being in charge of the publicity department in the publishing house of Hachette, communicated to him the articles published on his "History of English Literature," which had then just appeared. He was attacked violently; the religious journals especially pursued him with a ferocious hatred; and, at each attack which showed more passion than talent, he shrugged his shoulders and said with a gentle smile: "That is the article of a country priest." By that he meant the article of a worthy man at bottom, but of a limited worthy man, who shuts his eyes and understands absolutely nothing of that of which he speaks. A good toad, in short.

Then there is the poisoned article. This requires some talent; it is generally the work of a brainy man of letters, for it takes erudition and art to poison an article even to the commas. The effort is to put into it all that can wound, all that can injure; to exhume an author's forgotten phrases, to be reminded of which will surely be disagreeable to him; to employ the parallel column, in order to give citations deadly meanings; to accept of legends those parts which may be fatal in their effect; to set a wolf-trap at the end of every phrase; to cause a river of abominable insinuations to flow between the lines; and to conceal beneath each word a poisoned arrow the slightest prick from which will kill. I know two or three such writers, incapable either of love or of admiration, whose articles, apparently caressing, are nests of vipers under roses. Perfidy exudes from them as naturally as resin from the pine-trees. What rage, then, flows through their veins, what consciousness of their impotence, that they thus drivel upon every creation? One dreams of unheard-of basenesses, of dark and ugly souls, of unsightly persons who, haunted by the mediocrity of their own works, find relief in defiling the works of others. An article from one of these is, to my taste, the best of toads, covered with the pustules of envy, swollen with the venom of hatred. When a writer has the luck to swallow one of these, he is immune for months, beyond the reach of the most violent outrage.

Last, there is the mad article. I mean by that the article of a sectarian, of a political or religious crank. Ah! that misery of intolerance, of unruly passion, which causes madness, which kills all truth and justice! You know them, do you not? Going on the war-path in the very name of this justice and truth, they assume the most execrable *rôles*, become slanderers and informers, condemn people without any proof, invent proof if need be, accept idle tales as demonstrated certainties, fall furiously upon women and children, show no goodness, no charity, not even that simple good sense which prompts one to forgive in others the human fallibility characteristic of one's self. In this way what a work they are sure to leave behind them, a work which perhaps they imagine to be a work of justice and redemption! See, ten years after their death, some audacious investigator descending into this sewer of insult, where sleep the floods of putrescent invective disgorged in fits of manifest madness. To-day perhaps we explain these things to ourselves; but later what interpretation will be put upon this mass of ignominy spat in the faces of the noblest, the greatest? It will be left for our grandsons to do the real work of justice and put each workman of the century in his place. Then what a gibbet for the slanderers who heap insults upon the radiant glories of to-morrow! Ah! these horrible, green, and slimy toads are as sweet to me as the pastilles of ambrosia which give in advance the divine taste of immortality.

Frankly, these critics, these indefatigable purveyors of toads, astonish me. Why the devil do they follow so ugly a trade?

To injure the authors whom they thus insult? But the calculation is an absurd one; they do not injure them, but serve them. Why do they not perceive the certain, undeniable truth that a writer grows only under the influence of attacks? The greatest are the most attacked, and, if the attacks cease, they are on the decline. It is an infallible test; they attack me still, then I still exist. The real literary death begins with the silence which covers the works and the man. So that the insulters are really only the resounding trumpets that proclaim the glory of the writer whose triumph they assail so furiously.

Since it is clearly their desire to injure, their shrewdest policy would be silence. But here shines out the immanent justice of things. They cannot keep silent; they have to bark, like the dog, when the caravan passes. I am convinced that Providence, in whom on this occasion I am willing to believe, has given us writers abusive critics, as it has given wind to the sail, to swell it and drive it faster to the glorious port of the future. Every night we ought to pray heaven to grant us for the morrow our share of calumniators, for perhaps we should not exist but for them. Personally, in my modesty, I sometimes say to myself that my calumniators have given me really too splendid a share, in carrying my name to the four corners of the earth, and in kindly continuing, now that my old age is setting in, to lend me the aid of their brazen voices to announce to expectant peoples that I remain erect and invincible, their very attack being a confession that they have not yet beaten me down.

If they cannot injure the people whom they attack, whom do they injure, then? Why, they injure themselves! The pages which a critic leaves behind him are terrible testimony: for, if he is mistaken in his judgment of a work, the proof of his error remains forever. Imagine the figure which his verdict, thenceforth vain and convicted of imbecility, cuts in presence of the finally triumphant work. I think sometimes of Sainte-Beuve, whose memory certainly has its consoling features, for he has left a goodly number of equitable and definitive judgments; but, if he were to come back, what would be his annoyance to see the huge growth to which Balzac has attained, the undisputed royalty which he exercises over the modern novel, the Balzac whom he so combatted and denied! And Barbey d'Aurevilly, and Planche himself, better balanced,—how wise of them to remain in their graves, that they may not see most of their decisions reversed or witness the survival, in the eternal renewal of human genius, of the writers whom they consigned to oblivion!

Just now I spoke of the unclean cess pool which the mass of articles left by certain calumniators, afflicted with the mania for insult, is destined to become. But, without descending to these exceptional cases, the fate of which is certain, I am always surprised to see that most of the critics pay so little heed to the comparison that future generations will surely institute between their verdict and the work judged. In this matter reason and justice are alone sovereign, so that every criticism passed outside their realm is struck with death in advance. It will bring shame only upon the critic who utters it. He can have no excuse except sincerity, and even that will be considered stupidity. And as for the others, those who have acted basely, from passion or envy or hatred, they will be convicted of having been vile souls. Never have I read one of the many articles, filled with gall and anger, that have been directed against my books, without feeling a deep sense of compassion for the poor man who wrote it. Still another who wishes to present an unsightly appearance beneath his tombstone when both of us shall be dead and I shall be resting under mine, content with having acquitted myself of an honest workman's task.

Fall, then, continue to fall upon me, beneficent rain of toads! Continue to give me the courage to look men in the face without a feeling of despair.

Every morning, before my work begins, see to it that I do not fail to find upon my table, in my newspapers, the usual live toad, which has so long helped me to digest our fierce literary life. I know well that this is a hygienic measure which has become necessary to my vigor. And, on the day when my toad shall fail me, I shall know that my end is at hand, and that my last good page has been written.

Come, then! a toad yesterday, a toad to-day, while awaiting the toad of to-morrow, for my health and for my joy!

Trade-Union Despotism.

To the Editor of Liberty:

Mr. Cohen started out by affirming that trade unions were the most thoroughly Anarchistic organizations to be found in our present society. I asserted that trade unions are as despotic and arbitrary as any other organization, and no more Anarchistic than the Pullman or Carnegie companies, etc., and maintained that one was as ignorant of the principle of liberty as the others; and in No. 329 I attempted to prove it by citing some laws and rules of unions. In No. 334 Cohen has taken the position of justifying the tyranny of "enforcing arbitrary rules and driving non-union men out of town," such actions being "necessary to the life of the union," and he says that the "conditions" are to be blamed, and not the union men. How does that prove that unions are the most Anarchistic organizations in our present society? An

organization is more or less Anarchistic in proportion as it attempts to maintain or enforce the law of equal liberty, either among its own members or outsiders. A trade union is neither based on or regardful of equal liberty. It takes advantage of the despotic conditions that make men dependent on their own trade, and then enforces further despotic conditions, which makes some Anarchists and Socialists feel that "rat" or "scab" conditions are hardly the less evils

When Dennett compels his employees to attend prayers, that is despotic; but, when Typographical Union No. 21 compels twenty-six members on the alphabetical roll-call to "attend the funeral of a brother member, and, on failure to attend without excuse to be approved by the union [*i. e.*, a majority of the minority who attend the meeting], a fine shall be imposed of $2.50,"—that is Anarchistic, eh?

The idea of a plumb-line Anarchist, a propagandist of mutual banking, saying that, for a union "to be at all successful, every worker at his trade must be brought into the fold" (to establish what—justice?) is rich indeed.

Say, Cohen, while you are bringing them in, dragging them in, or kicking them out of town,—for their own good, of course, dear brother,—why not compel them to buy and read "Mutual Banking," or pay a fine of $5.00, the fine to be devoted to the propagation of Anarchism; you could justify it as a war measure against capitalism.

About that label, Cohen. "Our" official organ says that the absence of the label on a job is a sign of fraud or ratting, and "to the guilty party there can be no exculpation, indulgence, absolution, or apology." Verbum sap.

A. H. SIMPSON.
